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INSURANCE DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
DATE: March 8, 2005

New Hampshire Health Care Cost Website

Commissioner Roger Sevigny announced today the creation of a new health care cost website. For the first time, healthcare consumers will have price information on the cost of healthcare services. The site clearly shows the large variation in prices paid by insurance carriers for the same or similar healthcare services. For example, the cost of a chest x-ray ranges from \$18.00 to \$183.00 depending on which insurance carrier is purchasing the service from which provider. Similarly, the price of a knee arthroscopy ranges from \$887.00 to \$4,362.00 or more.

This initiative is the result of the work undertaken by an Advisory Group convened in September 2004 to assist Commissioner Sevigny to address market barriers to the development of new and innovative insurance products. The Advisory Group, working with the New Hampshire Institute for Health Policy and Practice at University of New Hampshire, developed this website to provide price information that would help consumers determine the cost of certain common inpatient and outpatient medical procedures. The new website, www.nhhealthcost.org, was developed by the Institute with the assistance and advice of the Advisory Group.

The cost information displayed on the website is based on claims data provided by CIGNA, Anthem and Harvard Pilgrim. All three carriers participated in this initiative by providing their data and claims information on these procedures and by working with the Advisory Group to make this information understandable to consumers. The information on the website shows the average cost for certain common procedures as well as a range of costs. Consumers with high deductible health care plans can use the site to better understand the costs associated with their insurance product, and to discuss the proposed cost of the procedure with their healthcare providers. Commissioner Sevigny congratulated the Advisory Group on its work in creating this website, stating that this work represented a major step in bringing greater transparency to health care pricing. He stated that he is hopeful that the upcoming collection of claims data will allow the site to be expanded to include provider specific price information. He also thanked the Institute of Health Policy and Practice for its invaluable assistance in developing this website.